

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01036 231830Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 231621Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6513

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1036

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S HEALTH -- VARIOUS AND CONFLICTING REPORTS

1. DISSIDENT SOVIET HISTORIAN ROY MEDVEDEV AT DINNER LAST NIGHT COMMENTED TO A GROUP OF CORRESPONDENTS, IN PRESENCE OF POLITICAL COUNSELOR, THAT BREZHNEV IS SUFFERING FROM LEUKEMIA AND THAT HE HAD HIS FIRST ATTACK OF THIS DISEASE TEN YEARS AGO. THIS IS A MILD FORM OF THE DISEASE, MEDVEDEV SAID, AND DOES NOT DIRECTLY ENDANGER BREZHNEV'S LIFE. HOWEVER, HE IS EXTREMELY SUSCEPTIBLE TO RESPIRATORY INFECTION IN THIS CONDITION AND BREZHNEV'S DOCTORS HAVE, THEREFORE, ORDERD HIM TO AVOID CONTACT WITH ALL VISITORS. WHEN ASKED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR AS TO WHERE THIS INFORMATION CAME FROM, MEDVEDEV REPLIED THAT HE HAS GOTTEN IT DIRECTLY FROM SOVIET MEDICAL CIRCLES.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR VIMONT TOLD US THAT SOVIET OFFICIAL IN BELGRADE HAD STATED TO FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICER THAT BREZHNEV HAD HEART ATTACK DECEMBER 19, THAT THIS HAD BEEN HIS THIRD HEART ATTACK AND THAT AS A RESULT OF IT HE WOULD RESIGN BEFORE THE 25TH CONGRESS.

3. JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT WAS REPORTEDLY TOLD DURING MIYAZAWA VISIT BY SOVIET VICE MINISTER OF HEALTH THAT BREZHNEV SUFFERING FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESS.

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4. COMMENT: MEDVEDEV HAS WIDE CONTACTS WITH LOCAL
WESTERN JOURNALISTS AND COULD WELL HAVE BEEN THE ULTIMATE
SOURCE OF RECENT STORIES IN THE U.S. PRESS THAT
BREZHNEV IS SUFFERING FROM LEUKEMIA.
STOESSEL

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